

Message Text

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13

ACTION EA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2132

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 485

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, AS, KFR

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN RECOGNITION OF NORTH KOREA

REF: SEOUL 484

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF AUSTRALIAN FONMIN WILLESEE LETTER TO FONMIN
KIM DONG-JO.

QUOTE. I HAVE READ WITH INTEREST YOUR LETTER OF 10 JANUARY AND I
WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND TO THE FRANK AND CORDIAL SENTIMENTS EXPRE-
SSED IN THAT LETTER. AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF
KOREA HAVE SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE REPUBLIC BEEN CLOSE AND
FRIENDLY AND IT IS IN THE CONFIDENCE THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE IN
THIS TRADITION THAT I NOW WRITE TO YOU.

IT IS TRUE THAT MY GOVERNMENT, LIKE YOUR, HAS REVIEWED ITS
POLICY WITH REGARD TO THE DPRK. WE TOO HAVE FELT THAT THE TIME HAD
COME TO INITIATE DIALOGUE WITH A GOVERNMENT WHICH IS CLEARLY IN
FULL CONTROL OF ITS TERRITORY AND TO END A POLICY WHICH NO LONGER
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SEEMED APPROPRIATE TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES. FOR THIS REASON WE

WELCOMED BOTH THE NORTH-SOUTH COMMUNIQUE OF 4 JULY 1972 AND THE STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT PARK OF 23 JUNE 1973. DURING 1973 AUSTRALIA BEGAN A MODEST DIALOGUE OF ITS OWN WITH THE DPRK IN JAKARTA AND EXCHANGED CERTAIN VISITS.

MY GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE CONSENSUS ON THE KOREAN QUESTION WHICH HAS BEEN ACHIEVED IN THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THE ROLE PLAYED BY BOTH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND THE USSR, FOLLOWING ON SO SOON UPON YOUR OWN GOVERNMENT'S RESTRAINED AND POSITIVE POLICIES WITH REGARD TO THE GENERAL DESIRE TO SEEK PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE AREA. I AM AWARE THAT TENSIONS IN THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE AND THE YELLOW SEA ALL TOO READILY DEVELOP AND MUST BE OF CONCERN TO YOUR GOVERNMENT. I AM INCLINED TO THE VIEW, HOWEVER, THAT THE BROADENING OF CONTACT BETWEEN THE DPRK AND OTHER NATIONS, RATHER THAN ENCOURAGING IT IN PROVOCATIVE POLICIES, IS MORE LIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO A REDUCTION OF TENSION. I DO NOT EXPECT SUDDEN OR DRAMATIC SHIFTS IN DPRK POLICY, BUT I BELIEVE THAT A WIDE EXPOSURE TO WORLD OPINION WILL EXERT A CONSTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE ON THE DPRK LEADERSHIP. I ALSO CONSIDER THAT WIDER DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF THE GOVERNMENTS IN SEOUL AND PYONGYANG COULD REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO POLITICAL STABILITY ON THE PENINSULA. I AM OF COURSE AWARE OF YOUR DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES HAVE SHOWN LITTLE DISPOSITION TO DEVELOP CONTACTS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. I SHARE YOUR DISAPPOINTMENT AND IT WILL REMAIN PART OF OUR POLICY TO ENCOURAGE A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE BY THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES.

AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS I WISH TO INFORM YOU THAT WE HAVE IN MIND TO BEGIN TALKS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DPRK IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE WITH A VIEW TO AGREEMENT ON MUTUAL RECOGNITION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. I APPRECIATE THAT YOU WILL FEEL THAT A LATER TIME FOR THIS ACTION WOULD BE BETTER. HOWEVER, BEARING IN MIND THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSALITY IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, INCLUDING RELATIONS WITH DIVIDED COUNTRIES WHERE SUCH IS POSSIBLE, WE JUDGE THAT WE SHOULD BEGIN THE TALKS NOW PROPOSED. THERE IS NO QUESTION ON OUR SIDE THAT THIS ACTION SHOULD IN ANY WAY DEROGATE FROM THE LONG-STANDING AND VERY FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. INDEED, IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH DPRK REPRESENTATIVES THIS POINT WILL BE MADE VERY CLEAR.

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I HAVE ASKED OUR AMBASSADOR IN SEOUL TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS FULLY AND FRANKLY WITH YOU. WHILST I CANNOT HOLD OUT A PROSPECT THAT WE MIGHT DEFER OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DPRK, I ASSURE YOU THAT WHATEVER VIEWS YOU OFFER WILL BE CONSIDERED MOST CAREFULLY IN KEEPING WITH THE QUALITY AND FRIENDLINESS OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

PLEASE ACCEPT, EXCELLENCY, THE ASSURANCES OF MY HIGHEST
CONSIDERATION. UNQUOTE.
ERICSTF

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